

Law Bans U.S. Involvement

Cambodia 'Adviser' Probed

Reuter

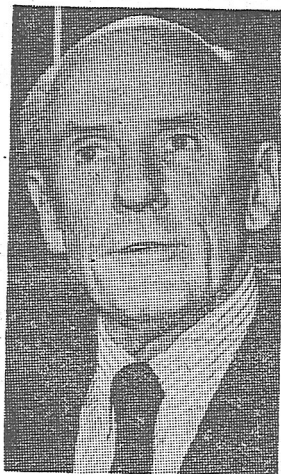
The State Department said yesterday it has asked the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh for a full report on a Washington Post dispatch that said an American military adviser was working in the field with Cambodian combat troops.

The Washington Post identified the officer as Maj. Lawrence Ondecker, and said he was advising Cambodian officers in the government command post at Kampot, a coastal town 80 miles south of Phnom Penh.

Congress has passed a law banning direct U.S. military involvement in Indochina, and the newspaper report prompted an angry Senate demand for an investigation.

The State Department noted that military personnel are required by law to maintain close liaison with Khmer officials to ensure safe delivery of U.S. military equipment.

"However, I do acknowledge that (delivery personnel) are not assigned as advisers and



SEN. ALAN CRANSTON

... assails administration

the are not supposed to function in a combat advisory role," department spokesman John King said.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee made preliminary inquiries during a nomination hearing for the ambas-

sador-designate to Cambodia, John G. Dean, a career Foreign Service officer.

But a bipartisan group of nearly two dozen senators formally requested an Armed Services Committee investigation, declaring in a statement that "covert and illegal war cannot be tolerated by the Congress."

Dean, until recently deputy chief of mission at the American embassy in Laos, told the Foreign Relations Committee that the State Department had asked the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh for clarification of the report.

However, he defended maintaining Foreign Service and military officers in the field, saying they were "the eyes and ears" of the embassy in determining how American aid was being used.

The committee approved Dean's appointment as ambassador but not before he promised to provide a list of the American personnel in Cambodia, who are limited by law to 200 men.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), a leader of last year's congressional campaign to end U.S. military involvement in Cambodia, said it apparently was not enough for Congress to pass laws.

"Apparently we underrated the administration's cunning and determination to go its own way regardless of the law ... We must constantly monitor the implementation (of the law) and we must police and publicize every violation," he said in a Senate speech.

Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said the panel would consider the request for investigation.